The Builder.

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T the risk of being reproached by one class of our readers, we devote a further space to notes on our late visit, with the British Archæological Association, to the remains of our ancient architectural glories in Warwickshire, and with the Archæological Institute to those of Norfolk; confining ourselves for the present to the latter. The increased value given to the ancient structures of a county, in the eyes of their proper guardians and those immediately around them, by the visit of a large body of persons from London, must be evident to all, whether they have personally observed the fact or not. And the effect is, that these buildings are looked at with more inquiring eyes, and their preservation, and in some cases restoration, is made more likely. Further, while ancient architecture is preserved, modern architecture is improved: the eye of the architectural observer becomes educated: those who would reproduce, not to say to improve on, the buildings of the middle ages, must study the works themselves. These lessons written in stone, are weakened by transmission to paper: the cathedrals and parish churches of England, not their representations alone, form the true field of study for our modern church architects.* The charm of these buildings is marvellous,—the beauty of the majority of them, past analysis: and when they are examined by men of varied attainments, taste, and views, brought together on these occasions, remarks are thrown out and opinions elicited which rouse the mind to inquiry, and lead to a knowledge of the principles on which they were constructed.

As the American minister observed, relative to the meeting, when at Yarmouth, "The genius, the talent, the strong sympathy with the past, which are congregated here, these are the wings upon which your inquirer and observer may endeavour to rise,—these are the pinions which may bear him up when he endeavours to acquire a knowledge of the glorious genius of ages gone by. You can hardly make present to your own minds, the admiration and delight with which one from our country views the works of art, with which England abounds. The beauties of nature, the God of nature has spread around us in common with yourselves; but works of art, traditions, and antiquities are peculiar to yourselves, and I am filled with delight, when I walk around the noble works of ancient times, and see how all unconsciously our ancestors transmitted to us works of such surpassing interest.

'They builded better than they knew,
The unconscious stone to beauty grew.'"

In respect of

TOPOGRAPHY,

too, much advantage may be expected from these provincial excursions, by inducing one or more of the residents in each town or village to chronicle facts, and preserve copies of records, deeds, and inscriptions, connected with the locality. The value of these often-derided labourers is now pretty generally understood, but it may not be useless to make one extract from an essay on the subject which was read by the Rev. Joseph Hunter.

"The philosopher may smile at the minuteness of the objects which are made of importance in the books of the topographer. But it is, in fact, in the minuteness of their details that their value consists. It is because the topographer has preserved his millions of facts and observations that his writings are valued. And if, looking upon his little selected region with the eye of the geographer and yet through a glass microscopically, on finding objects naturally magnified, since there is nothing greater near at hand with which to compare them, he speaks of some little heath or common which still exhibits the pristine condition of that portion of the island,—or draws attention to some little Tempe, beautiful as delivered by the hand of Nature and made more beautiful by the hand of Taste,—or if he find a few books or paintings which some curious person has collected and deposited there, and dwell upon them as if they were a Vatican library or a Florentine gallery,—if he find a church with some little architectural pretensions, and describe it with affectionate minuteness, as another would one of the great cathedrals of the empire—or a piece of middle-age sculpture of which he feels the beauty, and seeks to make others sensible of it,—I cannot think him uselessly employed, or that *that* can be a true philosophy which shall deride taste and enthusiasm such as this. And if, in the spirit of minute research in which he acts, he set before us every remain, however inconsiderable, that opens to us any insight into the manners or characters of the early inhabitants of this island, or of the persons who induced a new population on the ruins of another,—be it only a little fragment of masonry, or a little remain of a half-obliterated trackway, or a mound of earth raised by unknown hands and for some unknown purpose,—or if he find buried in the earth all that remains among us of some primeval inhabitant,—there is at least something which strikes pleasingly on the imagination: and if, as churches are the topographer's especial delight, he preserves from future accident the records inscribed on stone, or brass, or marble, he is perpetuating evidence of which an amount scarcely conceivable has been suffered to perish."

It is, indeed, scarcely conceivable how much has been suffered to perish,—not merely evidence *contained* in the ancient buildings, but that afforded by the buildings themselves.

Many of the churches in Norwich and the neighbourhood, at this time, greatly need maintenance and repair under proper direction. The want of this latter is sadly apparent, even where endeavours have been made to remedy the effects of time. We heard of several cases where fine wooden roofs had been cleared away, through the ignorance of parties applied to, and plastered abominations substituted; and we saw masonry imitated from the original, as was supposed, by the local workmen, without artistic aid or advice, which, instead of being advantageous, was an irremediable injury. The incumbents and guardians of churches are not *always* to be blamed for suffering the fabrics committed to their charge to fall into decay, but there is no excuse for them when they allow restorations, or even repairs, to be attempted, without proper professional assistance.

Efforts are being made at this moment to obtain funds for the repair of several of the churches, and we hope will be successful. Amongst the structures thus canvassed for is *St. Giles's*, a fine perpendicular church, with a tower 120 feet high, and a good open wood roof, which has solid wall-pieces and large figures of angels and shields. Enough, however, under this head.

One of the handsomest churches in Norwich is that of *St. Peter Mancroft*,† the burial place of Sir Thomas Browne,* which was completed in 1455. It has a fine tower covered with flint-work panelling (admirably done), and an open wood roof of very peculiar design, having the character of stone vaulting rather than of wooden construction. The font has a very curious canopy supported on pillars, apparently of little later date than the church itself. The fittings of the church require re-arrangement.†

St. Julian's, St. Mary's at Coslany, and St. Paul's, have round towers, ascribed to an early date. Little remains, however, to justify either assent or dissent in respect of the claims made by their local lovers.

Adjoining to St. Andrew's Hall, of which we spoke last week, are the remains of the Dominican Friary, with which the Hall was connected, and which are now used as a workhouse. Mr. Kerr, at one of the meetings, read a notice of the structure, and exhibited a plan of the remains.

The gates, through which alone the city could formerly be entered, have all disappeared. We shall get some account of them, however, in the interesting paper which Mr. Britton read in the public library,—

ON THE ANCIENT GATE-HOUSES OF THE CITY OF NORWICH.

The author commenced by congratulating his auditory on the general appreciation of archæological studies in recent times. A new era, he said, was to be dated from the first meeting of the joint society at Canterbury, in 1844; since when many valuable essays had been written and published. Every department of antiquity, and more especially the architectural antiquities of our own island, were now rendered familiar to every student; while the dates, styles, and peculiarities of our noble cathedrals, and even of village churches, were clearly defined and distinguished.

To Professor Willis the public was much indebted; and he (Mr. Britton) was ready to acknowledge the obligations he owed to that gentleman for the learning and talent he had exercised in elucidating the history and architectural peculiarities of the cathedrals of Canterbury, Winchester, and Norwich. His vivid and critical account of the latter edifice, had highly gratified him, for it was a source of great satisfaction to him to see a learned professor of one of our universities thus engaged in the illustration of a subject which had hitherto been very obscure, and but little understood. He was also gratified to see the improvement in the condition of the Cathedral of Norwich, compared with its state when he visited the city more than forty years ago. At that time the entire structure was in a lamentable state of dilapidation and neglect, and the repairs that were then in progress were heedlessly and tastelessly executed. Now, on the contrary, every attention was paid to the state of the building, and its officers were actively and liberally occupied in making sound and substantial repairs and restorations, in perfect accordance with the original style and character of the edifice.

Besides its magnificent and unique cathedral, the city of Norwich presented to the archæologist a series of elaborate *gate-houses*, forming the approaches to the cathedral and monastic precincts, and the bishop's palace; and until the present century it had also another equally interesting series of *gate-houses* in its surrounding fortified walls. Indeed, all the old cities, and many towns of Britain, were originally inclosed within massive stone walls, with tower gate-houses at intervals; the residence of the bishop, abbot, or prior, and the citadel, or castle, in which the governor, or other military lord, resided, being each inclosed within a separate wall, and provided with appropriate gate-houses. All these buildings served to indicate the lamentable state of so-

* At the Norwich meeting there were many architects, including Professor Cockerell, Messrs. J. Billing, Bowers, Daly, Donthorne, Ferrey, G. Godwin, Habershon, E. Hawkins, Kerr, Pearson, Poynter and Wyatt.

† From "*Magna Graeia Consuli*" of the great court of the castle, near the market-place, near which it is situated.

* Some time ago when the resting place of Sir Thomas B. was opened, his skull was immediately abstracted. Hunter says it is in private hands in Norwich. Some efforts should be made to obtain the restoration of it.

† The Rev. Thomas Wilson has published a book of travels in aid of the funds being raised for beautifying, repairing, and preserving the church, under the title of *Norwich in Egypt and Syria*. (Longman, London: Norwich). It is one of the most charming little books that we have read for some time, and deserves an extensive sale, as well on account of its own merits as of the purpose to which the profits are to be applied.

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